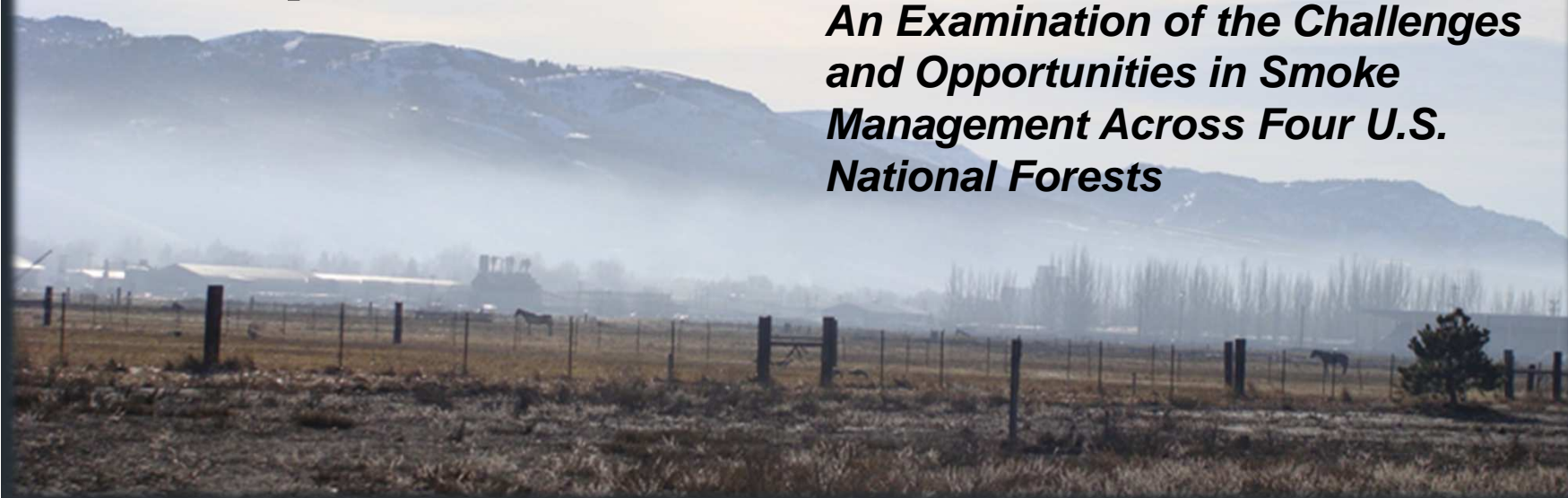


Perceptions of Smoke

*An Examination of the Challenges
and Opportunities in Smoke
Management Across Four U.S.
National Forests*



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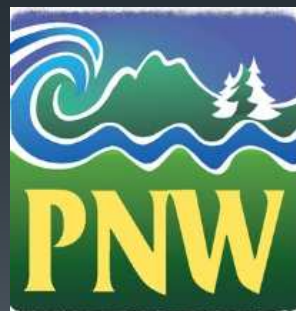
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To date, few studies have examined citizen tolerance for smoke or what influences that tolerance

Perceptions

Tolerance for
Smoke

Public Communication
Programs

Partnerships &
Collaboration

Year One



- Selection of Research Locations
- Site Visits and Semi Structured Interviews
- Transcriptions and Analysis

***35 Interviews with 55 Participants
across four locations***

- (5) Environmental Non- Governmental Organizations
- (6) Air Quality
- (2) Local Governance
- (29) State or Federal Agency
- (8) Private Landowner
- (1) Local fire protection
- (4) Timber Industry

Site Locations

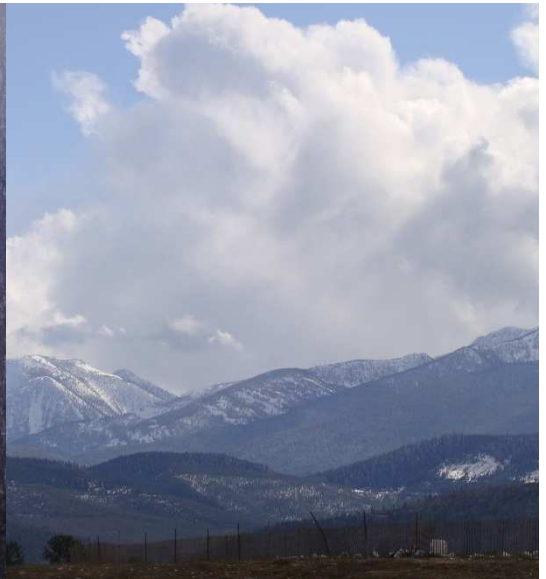


**Kootenai
National Forest**

**Shasta Trinity
National Forest**

**Fremont Winema
National Forest**

**Francis Marion
National Forest**



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Influencing Public Perceptions



Agency/Industry practices and regulation

Concerns about fire and smoke

Sociological, historical, and ecological considerations

- (5) Environmental NGO
- (6) Air Quality
- (2) Local Governance
- (29) State or Federal Agency
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Influencing Public Perceptions



Agency/Industry practices and regulation

- **Public lacks knowledge for agency boundaries and roles**

“it doesn’t matter which agency is burning, if something bad happens, I think the public perception automatically tags it to forest service . We get a bad rap for it. “

- **Public lack of understanding for regulations**
- **Agencies not showing genuine concern for smoke impacts on communities**
- **Smoke seen as a sign of wastefulness**

Public Perceptions

Concerns about fire and smoke

- **Health Repercussions from smoke**
- **General safety (roadways, homes)**
- **Fire getting out of control**
- **Negative impacts on recreation and commerce from smoke**



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Public Perceptions



Sociological, historical, and ecological considerations

- **“Locals” perceived as having a better understand of the need for fire on the landscape**
- **Influx of newcomers into regions**
- **Smoke impacting air quality**
- **Timber industry legacy**

Challenges for improving smoke tolerance

- Historically messages about burning have been unclear
- Building relationships with the community
- Perceived lack of communication from agencies
- Lack of effectiveness in communication tactics
- Lack of public understanding of regulations and policies



Toolbox

Public Communication
Strategies

Participation in Community-
Based Partnerships

Inter-agency Collaboration

Public Communication Strategies

Interactive communication



Attending public events
School programs
Community field trips
Face to face discussion
Personal phone calls
Public information officers
Open houses

Public Communication Strategies

➤ Communication Traplines

*“Who is that one person that you know if you talk to within an hour there are going to be 100 other people that are going to know? “
—FMO, Oregon*

➤ Timing



Participation in Community-Based Partnerships



Dialogue development between managers and stakeholders

- Concerns identified and discussed
- establishment of common ground
- Resolving uncertainties

Form community associations

Access to a broad base of resources

Inter-agency Collaboration

“Sometimes it is a little cumbersome to spend a half an hour listening to burns you don’t care about but it is worth it because I think it is the single most important thing we do. You get to talk to the meteorologist, the air districts, the board and the other burners. You can kind of get a good feel for how high the stakes are for burning that day. I think it is probably the best tool that we have.”

- North-East Air Alliance Member

Discuss outreach messages prior to public interface

- Avoid contradiction
- Messages appear more uniform and organized

Make more informed smoke management decisions

- Awareness of surrounding projects
- Minimize impacts on communities
- Information resource



Moving Forward...



Site reports back to locations

Information from project stage used to inform the 2nd and 3rd stages

- Public Surveys
- development and site testing of experimental strategies and programs

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WWETAC

